



Portrayal Of Indian Philosophy

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Abstract: *Rabindranath Tagore's writings have gained immense popularity due to the thoughts of lofty idealism, his literary grace and the beauty encompassed within them. His works rank amongst the masterpieces of literature. His work is stupendous and seeks deep contemplation. Tagore learnt the hymns of the Upanishads very early in life and they left a deep impact on his mind and philosophy of life. He gave a definite and farsighted solutions to many problems in life of India and of humanity as well. Many will find joy and hope in this confusing life in his social philosophy emanating from his cultural and his educational experiments that also include Shantiniketan. He feels each human being has a right to be part of this world, to participate in building the nation. The neglected villages, according to him ought to be self-sufficient and not depend on the urban - Industrial India.*

Key words-popularity, idealism, literary, encompassed, masterpieces.

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Tagore's literary grace, soulful writings and lofty ideals have left a mark on the world around and will continue doing so on the readers. His faith in the spiritual forces and finite and infinite helped in building up the world that was passing through many rough patches. He has based his philosophy of life more on the Upanishads than on theism. "To me the verses of Upanishads and the teachings of the Buddha have ever been things of the spirit and therefore endowed with boundless vital growth; and I have used them, both in my own life and in my preaching, as being instinct with individual meaning for me, as for others, and awaiting for their confirmation my own special testimony, which must have its value because of its individuality."

The word Dharma carried a deeper meaning for Tagore than Religion. He mentions in Sadhna that dharma which is usually translated into English as religion has a deeper meaning in our language." In his Address to the Parliament of Religions he says, "we, in our human nature, have a hunger for Bhama, for immensity, for something a great deal more than what we need immediately for the purpose of life." Thus for Tagore religion is not a passive acceptance of a doctrine but an active effort to know the truth hidden within oneself.

Religion, he feels, strengthens his faith in truth. It leads man to a new height which is free from contradiction. It liberates our individual personality. According to Tagore Religion widens our mind to be able to grasp human values. It is only after this that man understands the basic truth of religion. For Tagore religion has a predominant spiritual significance he maintains that though there is chaos in the universe, get one finds in it "a mysterious spirit of harmony, constantly modulating rebellious elements into creative unity."

He turns our vision inward where the glimpse of unity with Infinite is inevitable. He remarks: "our religions present for us the dreams of the ideal unity." According to him this unity of the self with the Infinite is an energizing truth and that this consciousness of our unity becomes spiritual. Tagore declares his alliance with God on a reciprocal basis. In Humanistic religion Tagore has the highest flowering of the religious consciousness. This consciousness achieves its full maturity when it reveals the true dignity of man in the truth of reality. Of his Religion of Man he says "The idea of the humanity of our God, or the divinity of Man the eternal, is the main subject of this book."

Rabindranath Tagore did not lay stress on religious ceremonies. Despite the fact that he was influenced by vedic teaching, he did not give any importance to vedic rituals "To me the verses of the Upanishads and the teachings of the Buddha have ever been things of the



spirit and there fore endowed with boundless vital growth; and I have used them both in my own life and my preaching."

In the times that Rabindranath Tagore grew up, religious bigotry and social evils were rampant and ate up the vitals of the society. Rituals and religious ceremonies were considered to be the essence of religion. There were some eminent social reformers who shaped the society and made a great contribution for the upliftment of the society in Bengal. Social philosophy delves deep into the foundations of the society. From ancient times philosophers explained how far human society has been natural or artificial. Some thinkers stressed on human freedom whereas others stressed on social control. "Man is born free but everywhere he is in chain. That problem is still on the whole, the one that was raised at its first beginning. Viz., in what sense, and to what extent, can human society be properly described as natural."

Society has been rampant with blind faith, dogmatic views, lack of education that hinder social progress, therefore, social philosophers become social reformers. The function of social philosophy is to promote unity of aim among men of good will and lay a basis of co-operation between those attacking different sides of the social problems, is the practical problem of social philosophy." The main aim of social philosophy is to enlighten the human mind in order to fight for political and economic freedom. Tagore remarks

"Deliverance is not for me in renunciation - I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight."

The present day's philosophy needs to embrace social religious and political values, based on Logic and Epistemology. It is therefore observed "A truly modern Indian Philosophy, it seems to me, can make effective contributions to the logic and epistemology of man's value cognitions including his apprehension of religious values. Our socio-political philosophers can profitably link their concepts with the insights of such teachers of the previous generation as Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore." Indian Philosophy, however, did not find a place in the world history of philosophy because the western philosophers felt that Indian Philosophy has a mystic and a religions element because in any case Upanishads are full of mysticism. Zeller levied criticism against Indian philosophy saying that "Indian Philosophy never lost contact with religion and never became independent."

The significance of 'Dharma' in India is understood in a broader sense. It is much wider, deeper and more comprehensive than the word 'religion'. There was a slight revolt seen in the Upanishads when there is transition from vedic thought to the upanishadic thought Upanishads are the fountainhead of Hinduism. Buddha later profounded his newer religion and advised people to follow the middle path between self-indulgence and self mortification. He was asked by a Jain

monk to practice asceticism. He practiced self mortification for five years. He began to live on only one hemp again, a single grain of rice, one Jajulee fruit daily. He sat on a patch of thorns, lay in a cemetery among decaying corpses, let filth accumulate excessively on his body, stood or squatted.

Rabindranath Tagore was deeply impressed by this middle path. He was deeply moved by the simplicity and universality of the religion of Buddha. Buddhists observed tolerance towards other religions. The living principle of this religion was the living principle of Buddhism. Its contributions to Indian culture are immense. Like Buddhism, Jainism revolted against vedic authority. Jainism did not believe in the existence of God and this religion rejected empty ritualism.

In Rabindranath Tagore's works, essence of all religions can be found. He was though never deeply attached to any one religion, he formed ideas for his own religion. Some of the Christian ideology did not appeal to Tagore. The original sin and the idea of heaven and hell could not really satisfy the poet. Even Bertrand Russell was of the opinion that Christianity is detrimental to the growth of personality. Russell writes "Religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly upon fear, it is partly the terror of the unknown, and partly, as I have said the wish to feel that you have a kind of elder brother who will stand by you in all your troubles and disputes. Fear is the basis of the whole thing - fear of the mysterious,



fear of defeat, fear of death. Fear of the parent of currently, and therefore, it is no wonder if cruelty and religion have gone hand-in-hand." This kind of a feeling, perhaps, would appear absolutely absurd to Tagore. To penetrate deeply into the view of religion discussed here, it will be fairly easy to understand the religious philosophy of the poet.

He maintains that religion should concentrate on humanity that's inspires our wisdom, claims our service and stimulates our love. He further says, "The Supreme being is all pervading, therefore, He is the innate good in all ----- God is the essence of goodness and this is the keynote of the teachings of the upanishads." The religious feeling of Tagore has pervaded his poetical and dramatic works. It is well depicted in dramas like Balmiki Prativa, Pratikir Pratishodh, Rajashi, Bisarjan and Gitanjali is of course full of religious songs.

Rabindranath Tagore did not care for asceticism. In Pratikir Pratishodh the call of the little girl makes the Sanyasi return to the worldly love. In Gitanjali we find "Many a song have I sung in many a mood of mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed 'He comes, comes, ever comes.'" Tagore was not guided by any particular religion He says "The West may believe in the soul of Man but she does not really believe that Universe has a soul." The poet of Gitanjali says "Come Brahmin purifying your mind and clasp the hands of all."

The most important proof of the existence of God finds repeated references in Tagore's

works is mostly theological proof. In The King of Dark Chamber, one of the characters, Janardhan, says "Look at the nice order and regularity prevailing all over, the place - how do you explain it without a king." Tagore finds another kind of evidence of the existence of God. When Einstein asked Tagore 'Does the table exist in someone's mind when there is no one in the room. Says Tagore "Yet it remains outside the individual mind, but not outside the universal mind. The table which I perceive is perceptible by the same kind of consciousness which I possess." Tagore feels that the securer evidence of God's reality is personal realization. It is a significant fact that the word "God' or 'Absolute' has not been frequently used in Tagore's works. The frequently used words are the 'Universal Man', 'The Supreme' 'Spirit' 'The Infinite' that indicate Tagore's conception of God and strike a balance between the demands of the Supreme and the human needs of such a concept.

The poet has always sought God in his songs. In Gitanjali he says "Even in my life have I sought thee with my songs. It was they who led me from door to door and with them have I felt about me, searching and touching my world."

He knows God loves his singing "I know thou takest pleasure in my singing. I know that only as a singer I come before thy presence. I touch by the edge of the far spreading wing of my song thy feet which I could never aspire to reach."

God Himself is a singer and the poet is amazed to hear His songs

"I know not how thou singest, my master!

I ever listen in silent amazement

The light of thy music illumines the world.

The life breath of thy music runs from sky to sky

The holy stream of thy music breaks through

All stony obstacles and rushes on"

Tagore is basically a poet and is widely acknowledged so, He wrote many plays and despite the fact that he wrote many philosophical essays, philosophy reflected in his creative work. His love for the All Supreme is so great that all else takes a back seat. He did not construct any philosophical system. As already noted, Tagore's understanding of spirituality was inspired by the Upanishads, his writings do not simply imitate the Upanishad doctrines. "If I am reluctant to speak about my own view of religion, it is because I have not come to my own religion through the portals of passive acceptance of a particular view owing some accident of birth. I was born to a family who were pioneers in the revival in our country of a religion based upon the utterance of Indian sages in the Upanishads. But owing to my idiosyncrasy of temperament, it was impossible for me to accept any religious teaching only on the ground that people in my surroundings believed it to be true."

Rabindranath himself states that he neglected his studies and at the age of thirteen he gave up formal education as he felt that the



prevailing school education was only mechanical and soulless. He felt that education in an institution only imparted information, which made a student forget the surroundings of his life. Natural growth of the child was literally snatched away from him: Immersed in his books, inside concrete, within the four walls, he missed learning from the beauty of Nature, he missed learning about the creation of the All Absolute. This system was repulsive to Tagore He said "the highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. He felt that from the very childhood habits are formed and knowledge is imparted in such a manner that they are weaned away from nature, and their mind and the world set in opposition from the beginning. Children are born in human world but are banished into the world of machines. They protest against this and want to be amidst nature, whether to play games or to just watch the birds and bees. But he is forced into submission Tagore was nature's poet. Therefore he gave importance on the closeness to nature. He was nature's poet. He said "From my infancy I had the keen sensitiveness which always kept my mind tingling with consciousness of the world around me, natural and human." The surrounding world gave him great joy. Each child gives a right to the child of entry into the heart of nature's surroundings.

Tagore's realization was deep and profound "And the tangible embodiment of this realization was the Santiniketan Asram." keeping

this in view Rabindranath was forced to establish Santiniketan' he was captivated by the idea that 'Santiriketan' would be the meeting place of Eastern and Western Culture.

"The west has flung its door open

Presentations are pouring from all corners

All will give and take

Nobody will return with empty hands

In the seashore of the great humanity of India"

Rabindranath Tagore was also concerned with Social problems. Despite his literary occupation, social problems did not escape his attention. His writings dealt with different social problems. He depicted the human conditions sympathetically. He found social evils engulf the whole country and was deeply distressed to see how the country was affected by social evils that create a cultural vacuum in the society-Tagore suffered great agony for the people. "Social mobility is the life-spring of all creative literary effort and it is precisely for this reason that the pre-independence period produced master minds. Great writers and artists, notable among, notable among whom was Rabindranath Tagore.' Barua further says "Art, philosophy and science-all constitute the fabric of culture.

An artist is not an isolated entity divorced from or unfamiliar with life that constitutes the life-pulse of a social group. Civilization means the ordering of civil life so that culture might be an efflorescence of such life." According to Swami

Vivekanand society is a divine creation. He laid emphasis on the harmonious relation between the individual and society.

Rabindranath attached spiritual importance to society. "He said "by nature all men are dwija or twice-born, first they are born to their home and then, for their fulfillment, they have to be born to the larger world." Rabindranath coined a new meaning to the word 'dwija'. Man has two selves-individual and social. There is no division between them. He felt that where man is separate as an individual, there is barbarism. He recorded further, "It is said in the Upanishads : When we realize others in us and ourselves in others, then alone we attain the truth. We can hide ourselves no longer..... : then alone we express ourselves."

Rabindranath felt that "our social ideals create the human world, but when our mind is diverted from them to greed of power, then in that state of intoxication. We live in a world of abnormality where our strength is not health and our liberty is not freedom. Therefore political freedom does not give us freedom when our mind is not free." The Indian society is presently losing social values. Men and women go to the temple and worship God but every moment ethical principles are violated.

CONCLUSION- The Vedas and Upanishads are interpreted in different lights. Indian philosophers like Ram Mohan Roy, Devendranath, Keshabchandra, Dayan and, Vivekanand, Rabindranath, Gandhiji and



Aurobindo base their thoughts on the ancient Indian wisdom. Most of these philosophers are thinkers as well as religious leaders Rabindranath, Gandhi Ji and Aurobindo are not religious preachers though religion happens to be the basis of their teachings.

Rabindranath Tagore was born and brought up in a Brahman environment. As a young man he was an ardent follower of his father's religion but later on he drew away as he could not confine himself with in a particular religion. He accepted the universal religion which he felt was a true religion Tagore seeks salvation from the moral plane. He starts from man and soars up to God and longs for human ascent. He realizes God in love, an egoless universal love that leads to god Rabindranath Tagore will always be remembered as a philosopher of man and for man. In one of his poems he desires to be remembered as a humanist "I tune my sitar and sing again let me be known as one for you. Let this alone be my last connotation." He feels deeply and fights for humanity. In his philosophy man forms the central theme. He teaches the religion of man in humanism. He has sung his songs, the notes have been echoing

throughout the world. His love has no limitations, no compulsions and no negations with a great appeal to the common man.

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